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1

HIGH STRENGTH BIORESORBABLE CO-POLYMERS

The present invention relates to polymer compositions and artefacts made therefrom. In particular the present invention relates to 5 polymers having high mechanical strength and their use for the manufacture of load bearing medical devices suitable for implantation within the body. More particularly the invention relates to bioresorbable glycolic acid-containing co-polymers and to implantable medical devices made therefrom.

10 Polymer compositions comprising poly-glycolic acid (PGA) and glycolic acid-containing co-polymers have an established use for medical implants. It has also been proposed that certain mechanical properties may be improved by extruding PGA melts or by drawing PGA in a plastic state. Isotropic PGA has a tensile strength of 15 between 50 to 100 MPa and a tensile modulus of between 2 and 4 GPa. A commercial product (SR-PGA) comprising PGA fibres in a PGA matrix has a flex strength and modulus of 200 – 250 MPa and 12 – 15 GPa, respectively. It is also reported in the literature that melt spun PGAs have tensile strength of about 750 MPa and a 20 modulus from 15 to 20 GPa. In US Patent No. 4968317 an example of a drawn PGA is stated to have a tensile strength of about 600MPa.

Although PGAs having improved strength characteristics are known, none of the known materials have the mechanical properties 25 approaching those of the metals conventionally used for load bearing implantable medical devices. A commercial alloy used for orthopaedic implant devices, known as Ti-6-4, comprises titanium with 6% aluminium and 4% vanadium and has a tensile strength in the range of 800 to 1000MPa and a modulus in the order of 100GPa.